

Message Text

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12

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-09 NSAE-00 PA-03

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R 191650 Z MAR 73
FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4976
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY NAIMEY
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: ETRD, PFOR, NI, DM, TO, XY

SUBJ: NIGERIAN MINISTER VISITS COTONOU

1. NIGERIAN COMMISSIONER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, DR ARIKPO, SPENT NIGHT MARCH 17-18 IN COTONOU ON RETURN FROM MEETING IN LOME. WHILE IN COTONOU DR ARIKPO HAD MEETING WITH MINFORAFF ALLADOYE AND WAS RECEIVED BY PRESIDENT KEREKOU.

2. IN INTERVIEW WITH DAHOMEY RADIO, ARIKPO CHARACTERIZED DAHO-NIGERIAN RELATIONS AS CORDIAL AND BROTHERLY. SAID FMG' S ATTITUDE TOWARDS MRGD IS ONE OF " TOTAL UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT". IN RESPONDING TO QUESTION BY INTERVIEWER TO EFFECT THAT NIGERIAN MARKET WOULD ABSORB PARTNERS IN FUTURE WEST AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY BECAUSE OF ITS SIZE, ARIKPO SAID SUCH OPINION IS " PERNICIOUS AND WITHOUT FOUNDATION". NIGERIAN POLICY IN THIS REGARD IS TO PROMOTE CREATION OF A COMMUNITY WHICH WOULD FAVOR DEVELOPMENT OF OUR HIGHWAYS, WATERWAYS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS, AND HARMONIZE OUR CUSTOMS SYSTEMS AS CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVING STANDARD OF LIVING OF OUR PEOPLES. IN EUROPE THERE IS AN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF NINE COUNTRIES WHICH INCLUDES SMALL AND LARGE COUNTRIES. BUT, ONE CANNOT SAY THAT ONE COUNTRY DOMINATES ANOTHER.

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3. ON REFUSAL OF NIGERIA TO ADHERE TO YAOUNDE CONVENTION, ARIKPO RECOGNISED THIS ARRANGEMENT HAS BROUGHT SOME BENEFITS, BUT CONCLUDED IT DOES NOT SUIT HIS COUNTRY. NIGERIA IS CONVINCED, HE EMPHASIZED, THAT WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES SHOULD GROUP THEMSELVES IN A COMMUNITY WHICH WOULD ENABLE THEM TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE EUROPEANS ON AN EQUAL FOOTING. MOREOVER, OAU CHARTER RECOMMENDS SUCH

REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS.

4. ARIKPO SAID PRIMARY PURPOSE OF MEETING IN LOME WAS TO DISCUSS TRANSIT TRAFFIC BETWEEN TOGO AND NIGERIA WHICH MUST PASS THROUGH DAHOMEY. HE SAID THREE GOVERNMENTS HAD REACHED A VERY SATISFACTORY AGREEMENT ON THE FLOW OF INTERSTATE TRAFFIC THROUGH DAHOMEY. ANDERSON

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*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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